



Meeting of the Board of Trustees
Monday, April 13, 2015
5:00-6:30 P.M.
MINUTES

Welcome and call to order at 5:07 PM

Board Members In Attendance: Chad Galts, Martin Huntley, Nicky Nichtern, Ellen Foley, Robin Warde, Nancy Levitt-Vieira, Julie Nora, Kathy Cloutier, Anna Cano Morales.

Absent: Rick Richards

Staff in Attendance: Liz Machado, Hanna Vila

Others: Andrea Castaneda

DISCUSSION

Andrea Castaneda (ICS parent and RIDE staffer) briefed the Board on the Funding Formula Commission findings.

- Commission was convened late and felt rushed.
- Discussions were skewed towards concerns of LEAs and unions.
- Main questions:
 - To what degree is the “funding follows the child” rule detrimental in ways that cause undue hardship to LEAs?
 - Do LEAs have expenses that charters don’t?
- Background: original funding formula was a very “pure” formula, but some things not anticipated:
 - Local contributions were flat-lined, assuming increases on state side.
 - Charter growth has accelerated, with charter management organizations (CMOs) now in the picture.
 - The recession dragged on.
- Meanwhile, no political will to consider more systemic adjustments (e.g. reducing number of school districts via regionalization).
- The funding formula drives distribution of \$2B per year.
- LEAs have a legitimate case that they have categories of costs not shared by charters – examples:
 - Textbook and transportation costs for non-public schools (\$28 per pupil expense (PPE))
 - Out of district SPED costs (\$559 PPE)

- Out of district career and technical (\$61 PPE)
 - Retiree health benefits (\$250 PPE)
 - Pre-school screening (\$116 PPE)
 - IEP services for 18-25 yr. olds (\$277 PPE)
 - Total (not including retiree health benefits) - \$1041 PPE
- On the other side, charters have substantial debt service and land-building rental costs to cover facilities while most LEAs have very limited such costs (\$800-900 PPE)
- Can these issues be resolved without a massive overhaul, and without a totally destructive fight?
- Commission is now writing its report. Not clear yet what recommendations will be included, or what the vote will be on those recommendations. Probable (?) immediate outcome: call for further study, with no recommendations for this legislative session.
- However, many districts are facing crisis. The state formula is currently masking some of the problem. When state funding levels out in FY17, many districts face going into the red. Many superintendents have an emotional sense of inequity, which is eliciting a lot of press attention.

League of Charter Schools current strategy:

- Attempt to defer any changes to next legislative session.
- Don't divide RIMA from other charters.

ACTION ITEMS

- The minutes of the previous meeting of March 23, 2015 were unanimously approved.
- The minutes of the Executive Session at the meeting on February 23, 2015 were unanimously approved.
- Motion to seal the Executive Session minutes of February 23, 2015 was unanimously approved.
- The 2015-16 ICS school calendar was unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

- Development Committee
 - Betsy Grenier has been contracted to help with development of capital campaign – will work up to 4 days per month.
 - We need 6+ very active proponents before we can determine feasibility of a campaign.
- Academic Committee:
 - Met with Patricia Sobral of Brown's Portuguese and Brazilian Studies department to discuss methods of assessing dual language competencies.

Approved on 5/18/15

- Were joined by Amelia Van Name Larson of the American Reading Company, who expressed interest in working with the school to create Portuguese reading assessments.
 - Next meeting Monday, May 4, 2015
- Finance Committee: Met just prior to this meeting
 - First draft of next year's budget looks to be in the black.
 - Draft of investment policy is being reviewed.
- Governance Committee:
 - No report.
- Health & Wellness Committee:
 - No report.
- Evaluation Committee: Has not met.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Step scale compliance
 - Renewed every 3 years.
 - Analysis based on prevailing wages of other charters and sending LEAs.
 - Will recommend new scale and one-time long-term anniversary payments for Board approval at next meeting.
- Strategic Plan
 - Draft outline from the working group was presented.
 - Working group requested input from Board members by the end of the week: is this outline on the right track?
- Long list of proposed charter school legislation in this legislative session presents us with daunting challenges. Some of it is very destructive in its intent. Most is not realistic. Charters do appear to have the support of the governor, but remains to be seen where a new commissioner might stand.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- High Expectations conference for districts collaborating with charters.

Next Board meeting: May 18, 2015, 5:00-6:30 pm.

By unanimous vote the meeting was adjourned at 6:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Martin Huntley

Approved on 5/18/15